

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED



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18 APR 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Science and Technology)

SUBJECT : Role of the Director, NRO

1. It seems to me, and I am sure it does to the DCI, that perhaps one of the basic difficulties in the entire NRO situation is the dual role of the Director, NRO. On the one hand, he is to function with impartiality as Director of the National Reconnaissance Program, and on the other he is charged with responsibility for the affairs of the USAF in his role as Undersecretary of the Air Force. Both jobs are not only full time, but they are often in diametric opposition, each to the other.
2. In CIA we found that there was the same sort of competition between the roles of the Deputy Director (Research) and the function of the Deputy Director, NRO. In this instance though, it was not so much a matter of divided loyalties as it was competition for decision-making time between two full-time jobs. The solution of appointing a full-time DDNRO with no role to play in a command sense in the Directorate for Science and Technology, appears to go a good distance to achieving a greater degree of impartiality than could have been achieved otherwise.
3. I submit that what may be needed is the appointment, within the Department of Defense, of an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence who would also function as Director, NRO. This person would be the focal point for all matters bearing on intelligence collection, dissemination and coordination. As senior administrator for the National Reconnaissance Program, he could also be concerned with purely peripheral reconnaissance, now not under the NRO/NRP. As a practical matter he would also become the Executive Agent for the United States Intelligence Board, which would thus place him functionally a good deal closer to the DCI as USIB Chairman than the present DNRO can be with his divided responsibilities and parochial interest in advancing the cause of a single service. I believe such a position would offer prospect for wider service participation in the policy and planning for the NRP than is today the case, with Air Force principals in control of most of the funds and all the strategic decision-making positions.

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4. I believe that the DCI may be thinking along these lines in connection with changes in the composition and responsibilities of the USIB. Perhaps the present confrontation with NRO principals offers you an opportunity to discuss this with the DCI if you feel the suggestion has any merit. I have purposely not alluded to the ancillary benefits I think the creation of such a position would offer, with regard to areas of functional conflict between CIA and DIA, for example, but that also might be considered, since DIA would be directly responsive to an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, were the position created. Obviously, it would take a statesmanlike appointment to make this idea workable.

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